

survival—whether they had escaped since no remains were ever found. And we journeyed back and forth through the possibilities and finally, after our journey through history—which we resolved with a vote in favor of history as recorded—Yadin motioned to me and said come over here and stand with those that we were travelling with, and we stood at the edge of the chasm looking out across the desert, across to the mountains at the other side. And we stood as a group, and altogether, at his command, we shouted across the chasm—across the desert—across the silence—Am Yisrael Chai. And back a slow, echoing voice speaking to us through history came the word Am, Yisrael Chai. Israel lives. The State lives. The people of Israel live. And that is the cause of America, it is the cause of people of conscience all across this planet, and that is why I am proud to be here with you tonight.

Mr. DEWINE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

ADOPTION PROMOTION ACT

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I think our friends in the House of Representatives deserve a great deal of praise for what they did yesterday. They passed a bill that would save the lives of many gravely threatened young people in this country. I am referring, of course, to the Adoption Promotion Act of 1997, the Camp-Kennelly legislation, which passed the House by an overwhelming vote of 416 to 5.

For the children in foster care in this country, the average time they spend in foster care is almost 2 years. That is just the average time. These 2 years are often the most important time in that child's development. We need to do everything we can to get these children in safe, stable, permanent, loving adoptive homes.

Why are these children being kept in foster care for so long? I said the average time was 2 years. Sometimes it is 3, 4, 5 years. Sometimes the most important years of their lives are spent in foster care, and sometimes they move from foster home to foster home to foster home. Why do they get shoved from one home to another? Why do they spend so many years in foster care? One reason is that, in some of these cases, the child protective services feel hemmed in by a misinterpretation of a Federal law, a well-intentioned Federal law that this Congress passed in 1980, a law that has done a great deal of good, but a law that contains one provision that I believe has caused a great deal of harm and has caused a great deal of confusion.

Under this 1980 law, the Federal Child Welfare Act, for a State to be eligible for Federal matching funds for foster care expenditures, that State must have a plan for the provision of child welfare services approved by the Secretary of HHS. The State plan must provide, that in each case, reasonable efforts will be made, first, prior to the placement of a child in foster care to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of a child from his home and, second, to make it possible for the child to return to his home.

In other words, Mr. President, no matter what the particular circumstances of a household may be, the State must make reasonable efforts to keep that household, that family together, and then to put it back together if it falls apart.

There is very strong evidence, evidence that I have seen firsthand as I have traveled the State of Ohio and talked to people who are professionals in this field, talked to judges, talked to child services workers, very strong evidence that reasonable efforts have, in some cases, become extraordinary efforts, efforts to keep families together at all costs, efforts to keep families together that are families really in name only. This has resulted in children being put back in abusive homes, put back in situations where no child should have to exist or live.

Every day in this country, three children die of abuse or neglect. Children who are being abused by their parents should simply not be reunified with those parents. That is common sense. The legislation passed yesterday by the House of Representatives makes it clear, by an overwhelming vote, that this is what the House thinks.

Now is the time for the Senate to take action. We have a very good piece of legislation, the Chafee-Rockefeller bill, of which I am honored to be a co-sponsor, that has been introduced in this body. It is a piece of legislation that contains many good provisions. One of the provisions it contains is identical language to what the House passed yesterday to simply say what we all know in our heart was intended by the 1980 act, and that is, yes, we should make reasonable efforts to put families back together, we should try to help them, but—but—when those decisions are made at the local, county level or city level, the people who make those decisions must always put safety and the welfare of that child first. The safety of the child must always be paramount. That is good common sense; it is good legislation.

We are halfway there. Now is the time for the U.S. Senate to complete the action and send that bill on to the President. The President has already said that he supports this language, that he supports this concept, that there is, in fact, a problem. The Senate should act very quickly and move on this legislation and really plug this loophole, which has caused a great deal of pain and many problems for our young people in this country today.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STEVENS). The Senator from Missouri.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, May 1 is a special day in the United States of America. It has been designated and observed as a national day of prayer. Citizens across the country—having recognized that those of us in positions of responsibility need the kind of wis-

dom to allow us to make good decisions—have today been observing this National Day of Prayer in our behalf. I rise to thank them.

Abraham Lincoln, in the midst of the crisis that perhaps did more to threaten this country and at the same time, more to unify it than any other crisis in history, continued to have a strong commitment and dedication to the concept of prayer when he called upon the Nation to reserve a time for repentance, for introspection, and for prayer.

This Nation has survived great challenges—yet still faces great challenges. I believe that its success in the face of challenge in large measure is due to the fact that people have prayed.

A couple thousand years ago, when the Apostle Paul was writing a letter to his friend Timothy, he advised Timothy to say, "Pray for each other and pray especially for those who are in authority that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all Godliness and honesty."

I think that was good advice 2,000 years ago, and it is good advice today.

I rise today, as we close this day in the U.S. Senate, to say to those Americans who have been a part of this observance, referred to as the "National Day of Prayer," thank you for your prayers and, as a matter of fact, I think all America owes a debt of gratitude to those who have carried the well-being and welfare of this country to God in prayer on a regular basis. It is with that in mind that I believe the National Day of Prayer is a strong symbol that we have prayer all year—on a continuing basis so that we might do things that advance the very cause for which I think God sent his Son to the world—that we might live life and live it more abundantly. That is the true position of Government, that we would create conditions under which people could live and live in greater abundance and greater freedom.

So I take this moment to reflect upon those who have cared enough to pray for us and to extend to them my appreciation for what they have done in our behalf.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE FOR PATTY MCNALLY, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT PROTOCOL OFFICER

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I rise today to express the deep gratitude of the Senate to Ms. Patty McNally, Executive Assistant and Protocol Officer in the sergeant at arms' office, who is retiring after more than 20 years of dedicated public service in the Senate.